SOIL conservation

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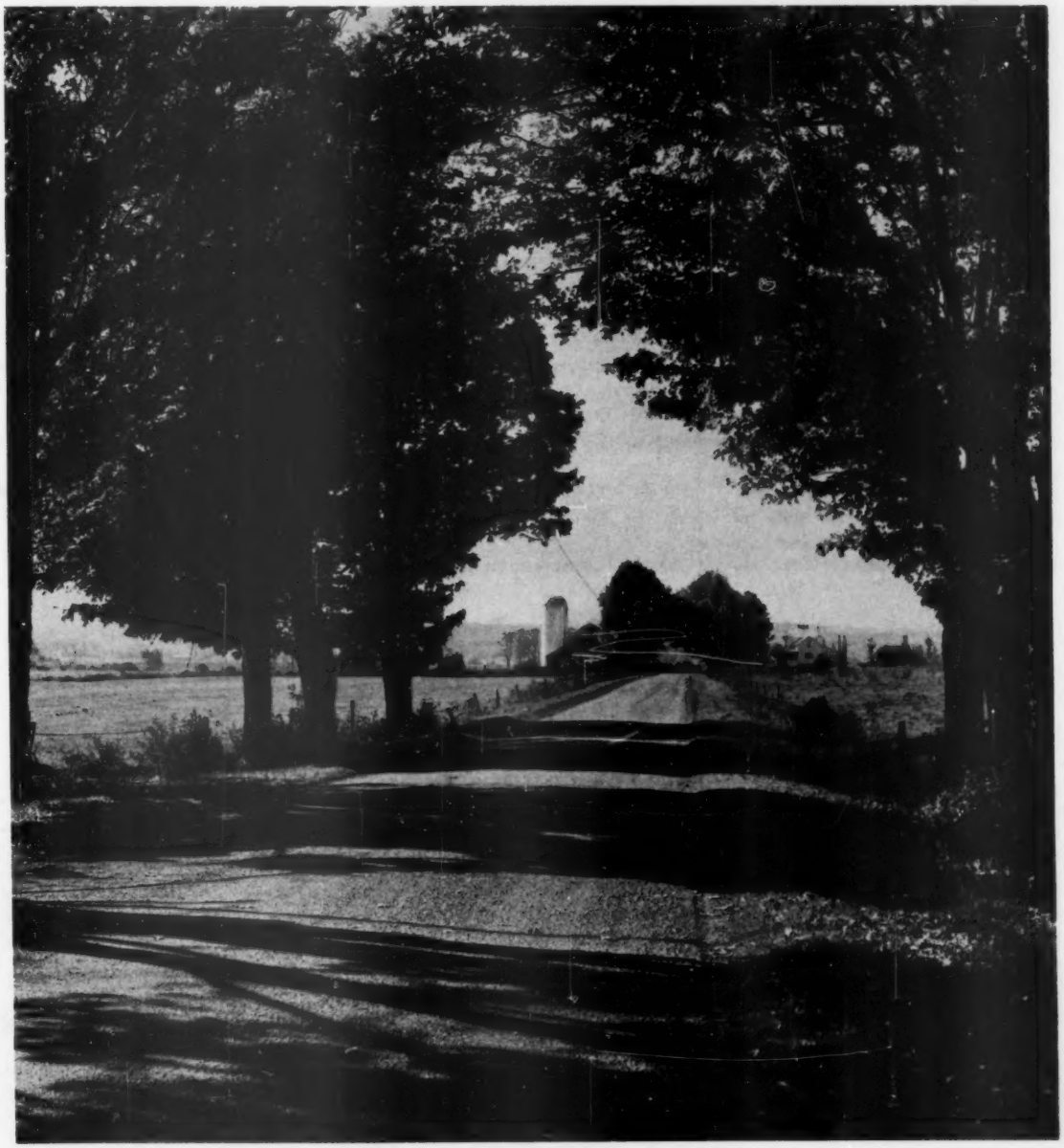

SOIL conservation

September 1971, Vol. 37, No. 2

This month SOIL CONSERVATION reports on a variety of topics. Sellers Archer gives us an account of his recent visit to central Florida where he observed what four watershed projects have done to the area. John Cross tells us of a place in South Dakota where floodwater-detention dams replaced a "big ditch."

There's a report of a Washington cattleman's efforts to combat stream pollution, and there's an article about a summer project in Texas that puts money in teenage boys' pockets and the entire community benefits.

Last month SOIL CONSERVATION took a look at young people and their conservation activities; this month the centerspread gives equal time to oldtimers — octogenarians in West Virginia.

COVER: A country road near Ellicottville, New York, photographed at summer's end by Bob Branstead, Washington, D.C.

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A new kind of magazine

Prepared in the Division of Information, Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20205.

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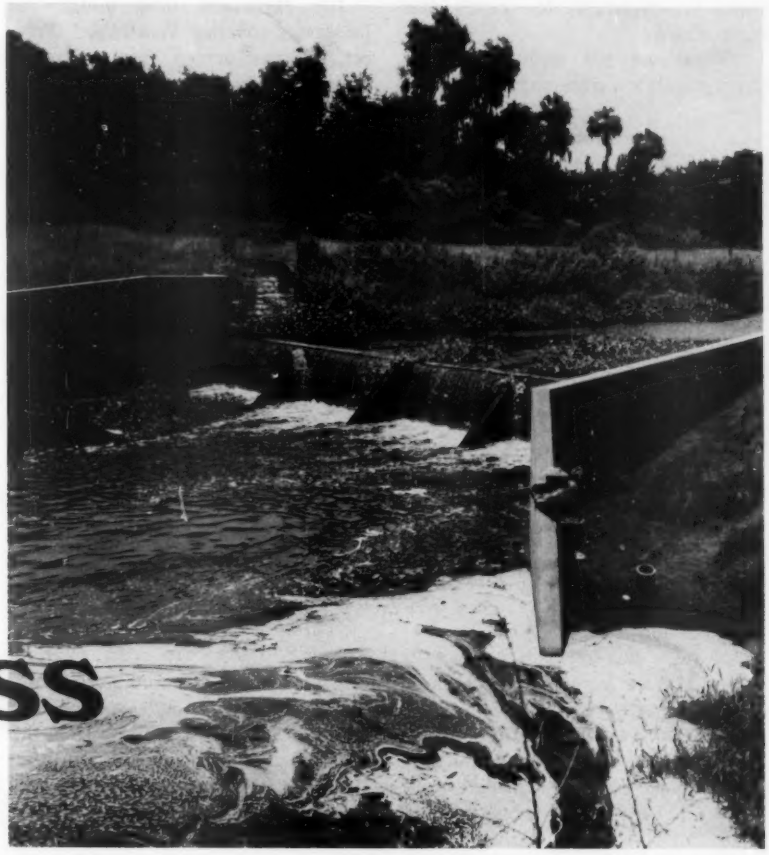


Endless Water

by Sellers G. Archer
Public information specialist, SCS
Fort Worth, Texas

Good fishing is one of the many benefits that four watershed projects have brought to central Florida's Highlands County.

In central Florida's Highlands County, which for years had been alternately plagued by floods and drought, there is water, water everywhere—all year round.

I visited the area near the end of a spring-long drought and found lakes nearly full and water standing in stream channels. And that's the way it is now that four watershed projects are in full swing in the area. The objective is to keep as much water as possible in the natural lakes and in the 40 miles of stream channels that have been enlarged or cleaned out.

Area conservationist L. A. "Jake" Jacobsen was my host. He took me to see L. L. Holmes who was, when he retired a few years ago, the largest producer of calladium bulbs for the nation's flower gardens. His present occupation is fishing. I found him to be a practical environmentalist with a basic understanding of the area's ecology. We sat in the living room of his home on the banks of beautiful Lake Huntley, and he explained why landowners of a generation ago had drained wetlands.

"They did what came naturally —making living space for themselves. It is thoughtless to decry their errors for they had no technical assistance or the soils information that is now available from the Soil Conservation Service," he said. "And there was no watershed program to help them establish

water management for lands that were cleared.

"What we are doing today in the county's watersheds is not drainage," he went on. "We are now putting water back on—and in—the land. We want the lakes and channels to hold the maximum amount of water possible; we want to stop the wide fluctuations in water levels."

Lake Huntley is one of four natural lakes in the Lake Placid East Chain of Lakes. Floods that inundated the high-value vegetable and flower crops around this 740-acre lake cost the landowners dearly until the watershed project stabilized the lake waters at no more than 1 foot above the fixed spillway.

Lake Clay, the next in line, permits a rise of only 18 inches above the spillway. The water level in Lake Grassy, the upper lake, used to fluctuate as much as 6 feet between high and low stages. Now it rises no more than 6 inches above the fixed spillway.

Downstream from these three lakes lies Lake Istokpoga, the second largest lake in Florida. And below it lies 25,000 acres of organic soils that had been drained earlier and turned into pastures of maidencane. When the grass was grazed out, the land was used for vegetables, flowers, and other high-value crops.

Holmes told us that he bought some of that land when he went into the business of producing caladium bulbs.

"Peat, the organic soil, decomposes rapidly when exposed to air and cultivated. When dry it can catch on fire and smolder until a big rain puts it out. The fire can leave a hole 3 to 5 feet deep and several feet across. But this hasn't happened since we got our watershed project," Holmes said.

He explained that under the Istokpoga Marsh Watershed Project, ditches across the peat area were enlarged and corrugated metal water-control structures were installed at regular intervals to hold water; ditch capacity was retained to drain floodwater away. Now water seeping from the ditches keeps the water level high throughout the area. Inlet structures were also installed at Lake Istokpoga to permit recharging of the system by gravity flow.

"If a fire should be started by lightning now," said Holmes, "we could pump water from the canals and get it out in a hurry.

"But the biggest change is in the fishing," Holmes told us. "In my 25 years on Lake Huntley I have never seen so many fishermen or so many good catches of fish. Five and 6-pound bass are not unusual, and they sometimes run to 10 pounds. There are also channel catfish, bream, speckled perch, and shellcrackers. It isn't unusual to see 25 boats on the lake early in the day and many people fishing around the banks. Later the lake gets crowded with water skiers."

Wildlife has come back strong from damage done in the old drain-and-farm days. Wood ducks and wild turkeys come to Holmes' barn to feed. Sandhill cranes and white, blue, and green herons are on the increase. And so are "cow" egrets, the strange birds from Africa that are the constant companions of livestock.

Quail, cottontail rabbits, and deer had a rough time before floods were brought under control, according to Holmes. But now there are some deer and a growing population of quail and rabbits.

"What about the vanishing American alligator?" I asked C. M. Payne, a rancher living near Sebring and treasurer of the Fisheating Creek Watershed Project committee.

"As far as I know," Payne said, "and I have been here a long time, the alligator never has been rare nor endangered. Until a few years ago poachers got most of the large ones. Now there is no market for them, and they are a nuisance. We regularly lose calves and other small animals to them."

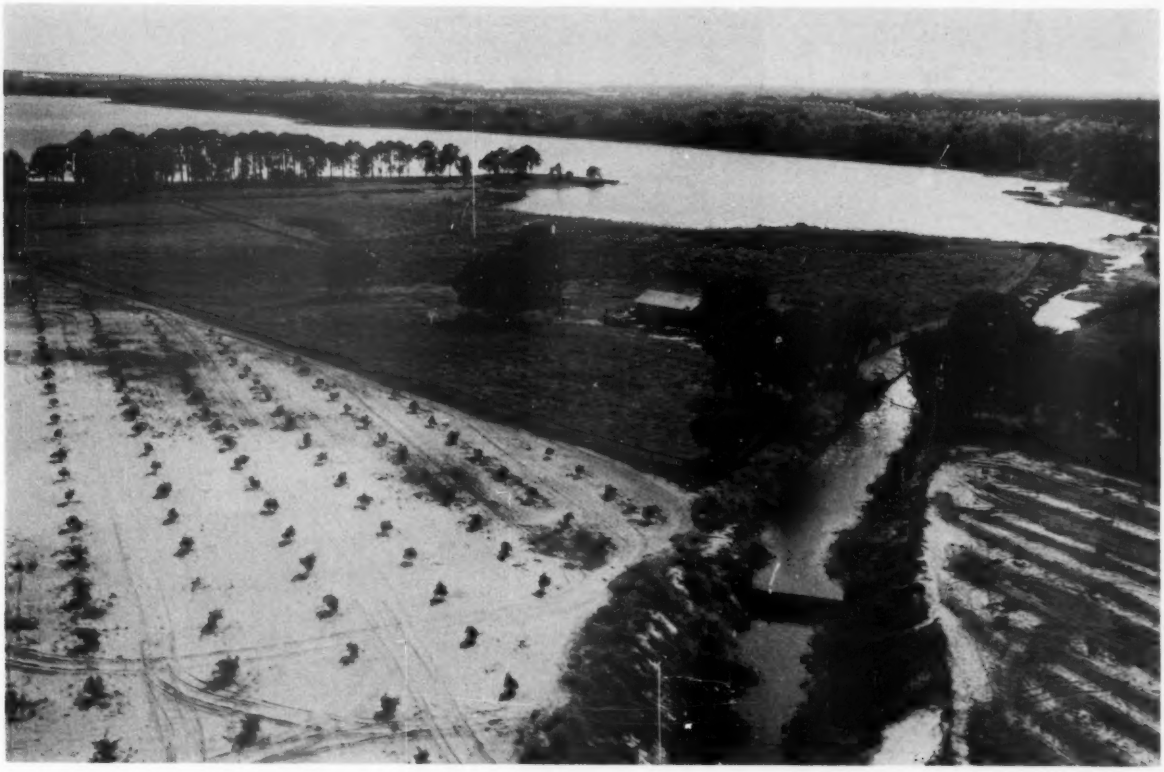
"Farmer independence" is the reason he gave for landowners in the watershed preferring to tax themselves to maintain the project, rather than letting a willing county government take over the responsibility.

Our next stop was at the office of county attorney R. P. Dunty, Jr., in the town of Lake Placid.

"Our biggest job is to keep the channels clear of excessive hyacinth growth," Dunty told us. "We spray about 280 acres of water. The spray is not damaging to wildlife. And it improves fishing and makes it possible for waterfowl to land on the channels and streams."

I asked Jacobsen about fishing in the several miles of channels in the four watersheds. "It's all good," he replied. "The channels and structures are favored over the open lakes when there is considerable water flow."

In summing up the overall effect of the watershed projects on the county, Jacobsen said, "There is no question about the widespread benefits to our county from the four watershed projects. They have added greatly to economic growth in the county and have brought recreation opportunity to the people in the area. Also, these projects have increased the people's concern for a better environment and for the protection of our natural resources." ♦



(Top) The channel on the right drops water 5 feet between Lake Huntley, in the background, and Lake Clay. The first drop structure, right foreground, controls water elevation.
(Above) This improved channel has brought beauty and recreation to homeowners along its banks.

Dog pond

by Eugene Fellows
District conservationist, SCS
Morrisville, Vt.

Ponds, a center of interest on many farms, provide a wide variety of benefits to their owners. Dr. William N. Bernhard and his wife Betsy have four ponds on their farm in Stowe, Vermont. Each pond was designed and built for a specific purpose: water supply, fire protection, recreation—and dog training.

Dr. Bernhard is an amateur Labrador retriever trainer.

The Bernhards' 375-acre farm, perched on a hilltop north of Stowe in Lamoille County, is a picturesque expanse of well-managed woodland and lush pastures, an ideal retriever training area. As cooperators with their Lamoille County Natural Resource Conservation District, the Bernhards have done considerable work to improve and protect their land and water resource.

"A few years ago, Dr. Bernhard requested SCS technical planning aid in rebuilding one of his ponds," recalls Carleton E. Piper, SCS technician. "Because he wanted to use the pond for retriever dog training, some special features had to be built into the pond. We agreed to help."

A professional retriever trainer was needed to coordinate the Bernhard ideas with SCS pond construction design, so Jake Baird of the Brome Stages Kennel, Knowlton, Quebec, Canada, was called in to help. The final design met retriever training and trial competition requirements.

The existing pond was completely drained. A bulldozer reshaped the bottom, making some areas sufficiently shallow for an average dog to run in neck-deep water. Other

areas were shaped for a 6-foot depth. Three circular islands, about 6 feet in diameter, were formed. A peninsula, 20 feet wide and 60 feet long, was shaped to extend almost to the center of the pond. Like the islands, it can serve as an obstacle in training exercises.

Total cost of the changes came to $400; the cost of the first edition of the pond ran close to the same amount.

As soon as the winter ice is gone from the pond, Dr. Bernhard and his wife start their retriever training. Puppies are not put in the water until the water is warm. A dog without previous training is taught to retrieve objects tossed along the edge of the pond or a few yards into the water. Next, he is taught to follow one of the Bernhards rowing a boat around the pond. After about a year's training, the dog can retrieve objects from the far side of the pond. As he continues to learn, the retriever is trained to follow hand and whistle signals. By the time he is 2 or 3 years old, he understands well his trainer's signals. After a few years of rigorous training, the dog is ready for retriever trial competition.

According to Dr. Bernhard, interest in retriever training is growing in the area. At least eight amateur trainers use the Bernhard pond on a regular basis, and trial competitions are often held there.

Expressing satisfaction in the success of their dog pond, Mrs. Bernhard says, "We've turned two of our most unused acres of land into a very valuable part of our farm and a center for this wonderful outdoor sport." ♦

Ronald Bouchard (above), local school teacher and retriever trainer, works his dog on the Bernhard dog pond. The three islands and the peninsula are specially planned for retriever training. Jake Baird (opposite page), a professional retriever trainer from Canada, and his retriever, Charley, run through a training exercise on the Bernhard pond.

Silver lining for Silver Creek

by John M. Cross
Information specialist, SCS
Lincoln, Nebr.

When farmers in the long, narrow Silver Creek Valley of South Dakota complain about the "Big Ditch," they don't mean the Panama Canal.

They are talking, with a disgust that has survived for 64 years, about a 1907 attempt to overcome periodic flooding along Silver Creek. That year the local landowners were assessed to pay for digging a long trench down the valley, presumably to carry floodwaters away.

But something went wrong with the engineering, because the ditch was dug on the highest land in the valley, dividing the Silver Creek bottom lands from the larger flood plain of the Big Sioux River. After heavy rains, water flowed, not into the Big Ditch, but away from it in both directions, flooding farms and a nearby railway and county road.

Today the ditch is grown up with trees and clogged with sediment, but it is still a bitter memory to several families of Norwegian ancestry who helped pay for it.

Now the farmers along Silver Creek are trying a different approach to flood control. They have the first watershed-protection and flood-prevention project in South Dakota planned under Public Law 566. Plans were approved late in 1956.

Gordon Volden, a fourth generation farmer and a member of the board of managers of Silver Creek watershed, expresses present-day thinking along Silver Creek in saying, "It's too bad we didn't start our conservation work earlier." He remembers catching bullheads and walleyes in Silver Creek as a boy. In those days, he recalls, the bottom was sandy and the banks were straight.

In recent years, the bottom and the banks have been covered with mud—and often with floodwater.

Floods usually come in June, when young crops look most promising. Rainfall is highest in this prairie country during the spring, and the melt from 32 inches of average annual snowfall adds to the flow.

Today's watershed plan is sounder than the Big Ditch experiment. It calls for building six floodwater-detention dams in the upper reaches of the watershed to store excess water safely until it can flow away. About 3 miles of creek channel are to be relocated, and 13 miles will be improved by clearing and snagging, widening or deepening. Some channel will be left untouched.

No channel work has been done so far, but four dams have been built—the first in 1959 and the most recent in 1962. Three of the flood pools are normally dry, but the fourth dam has a year-round pool of 13 acres and is stocked with fish.

"There's no question but that the four dams have reduced flooding from Silver Creek by about 50 percent," Volden reports.

Now the push is on to finish the project.

"About the only time you can get everybody together in this community is in church—or at a fire," says Curtis Eggers, chairman of the Silver Creek board of managers. "But I think that the people around here are ready now to go ahead and complete the work they set out to do."

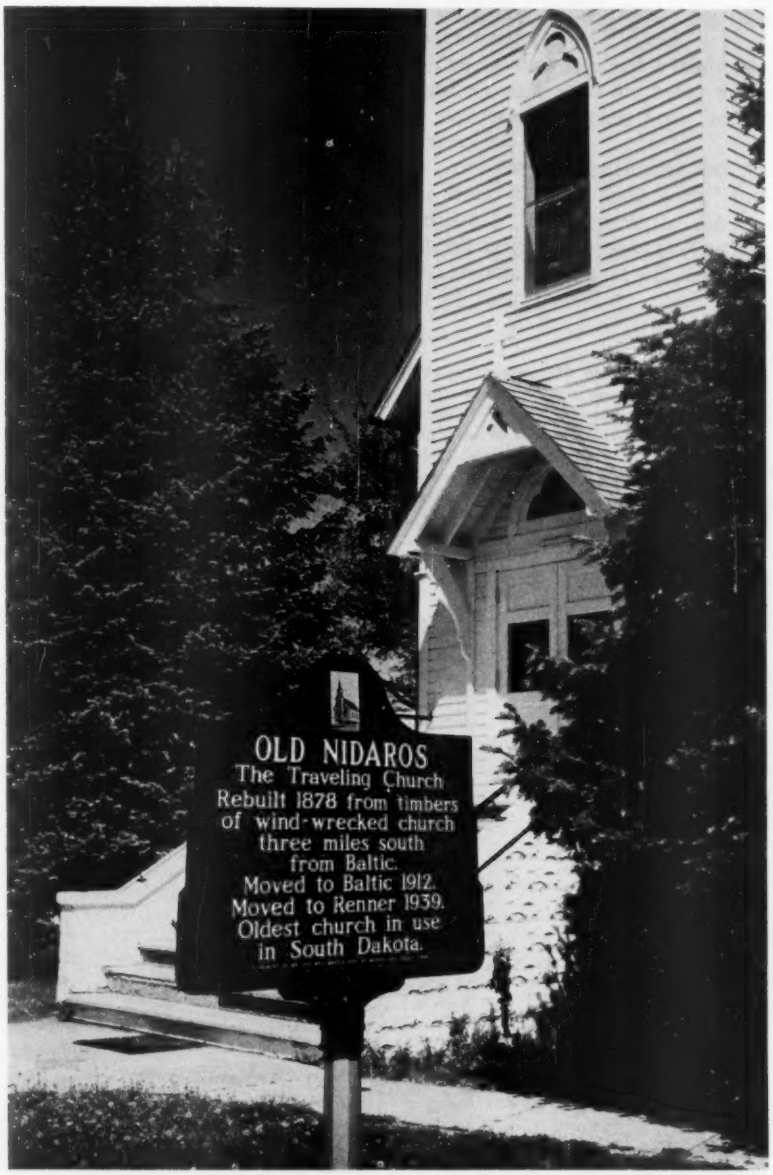
He points out that hill farmers must be willing to make a few sacrifices to protect the land below. By the same token, valley farmers have to make adjustments in land use necessary to improving channels and getting the water through safely, without flooding.

Eggers said that clear understanding of the project takes time and that, in the 9 years the project has been inactive, local people have been thinking their problems through.

"Our people paid through the nose for the big ditch," says Earl Riswold, another project manager. "I can see why they would be a little slow to accept a new project."

Riswold, a third generation farmer in the valley, is among the leaders in upstream watershed treatment. He reports that parallel terraces constructed on a field in his neighborhood held a 3-inch rain last year without damage. The corn yield averaged 95 bushels an acre.

"It takes a while for people to settle differences and work together," philosophizes Riswold. "But in the long run, they are going to do what is best for themselves and their neighbors. You've just got to be patient." ♦



(Left) A mishmash of driftwood, sandbars, undergrowth, and trash choke the capacity of Silver Creek channel to carry spring floodwaters that often follow heavy rains and snowmelt.
(Right) Old Nidaros Lutheran Church, South Dakota's oldest church still in use, is still threatened by periodic floods in the Silver Creek watershed. Waters lapped at its steps in 1969.

Walnut Creek runs clean, and teenage boys walk proud

by Claude D. Crowley
Information specialist, SCS
Fort Worth, Tex.

For two summers now the Seguin, Texas, city fathers have taken an innovative approach to downtown problems. And they have proved that resource conservation and human conservation are inseparably linked—at least in Seguin.

The story centers around Walnut Creek, a meandering 2-mile long stream flowing through downtown just three blocks west of the Guadalupe County courthouse. Along the slopes of the little canyon that the stream has worn into the landscape are several springs. These springs, mostly dry or covered up now, gave the city its first name, Walnut Springs.

Oldtimers tell of swimming and wading in Walnut Creek and drinking from the springs. They recall that the streambanks were a pleasant place for a Sunday afternoon stroll under picturesque live oaks.

But as the town and the pressures of civilization grew, the creek began to fill up with old tires, cans, and assorted junk. People no longer sought the cool waters for wading. The entire creek area, well over a

mile through downtown and averaging more than 100 feet wide, grew up in almost unpenetrable brush.

The creek enjoyed a brief revival in the 1930's. It was cleaned out, and walkways and pedestrian bridges were built. But the problems of maintenance during the depression and war years overcame the improvements. Old washing machines and water heaters slid down the steep banks, soon to be wrapped in thick vines and brush.

"We got a lot of complaints about the condition of the creek," Mayor Al Koebig said. "And like most communities, we have some juvenile problems. So we tried to solve the two problems at the same time."

M. A. Goodrum, Seguin's superintendent of public works, made a study of the Walnut Creek problem early in 1970.

The Soil Conservation Service's district conservationist, Carroll Adams, helped city officials in planning for erosion control and beautification along the creek.

"We worked out a program to employ 14- to 16-year-old youths to remove the debris from the creek," Koebig explained. "This would result, we hoped, in an improved downtown environment, and it would give the young men a sense of pride, a little income, and the knowledge that they could work with the establishment.

"The city council agreed to budget $15,000 the first summer," Koebig explained. "This was all local funds—no state or federal aid. William Medley, director of the Seguin Boys Club, handled many of the details of employment. He also provided counseling to the boys."

Thirty-six boys were hired; they cleared junk and brush from about 6,280 feet along the creek. At the end of the summer, people could once again see the stately, moss-hung live oaks reflected in clean water.

"When the 1971 program was announced, we had 165 applicants," Goodrum reports. "We only employed 36 boys and had a shorter work season than in 1970. About 40 percent of the boys were repeaters from the first year. We cut weeds and generally improved on what we had done the first year.

"We have had a few problems with this program, of course," Goodrum said, "but we are sold on its value and plan to continue it with appropriate supervision and improvements."

"Naturally the first thing people see is the improved creek area," Mayor Koebig says, "but those of us who are close to the program see immediate and long-term benefits for the boys. We designed this program for the younger teenagers, thinking that at that age we could impress on them the value of work and the pride of participating in community-improving projects."

Has it worked? Such a program is difficult to measure, city officials say, but one of the more substantial endorsements comes from Captain Leroy Schneider, Seguin's police chief.

The city has retained a landscape architect, and plans are being made to convert the creek area into a greenbelt.

"And the real beginning will be the work done by these boys," said Koebig. "This experience can establish attitudes toward conservation and responsibility that will last them all of their lives." ♦

(Opposite page) The townspeople in Seguin can once again see stately, moss-draped live oaks reflected in the junk-free water of Walnut Creek—within three blocks of the courthouse.
(Below) The teenage boys working in the Walnut Creek cleanup project did not use power tools—the only motorized equipment used was the city trucks that hauled off the debris.

1,000 years of living

A district conservationist in West Virginia has just finished a series of "best sellers" for a local daily newspaper on active cooperators in the county who are 80 years old or older.

Author of the 17 articles is John Cooper, 51, an animal industry major who also worked on the staff of a college newspaper.

His stories on elderly cooperators, which ran on Thursdays on

by Hubert Kelley
Information Division, SCS
Washington, D.C.

Captions are from John Cooper's original articles.

"What a group! More than 1,000 years of living. It must be the air, the hills, or the land itself that has given the magic potion that has kept these genial gentlemen robust and strong for an average of fourscore and 6 years. John R. Hussell (left) is 89 years old. He bought his farm in 1909. He didn't become a district cooperator until he was in his late sixties, in 1951."

the front page of the *Point Pleasant Register* (circulation 7,300 plus), boosted the paper's press run by at least 100 copies on the day they appeared. Editor Robert Wingett couldn't have been happier.

"The families of the octogenarians alone could account for the increase in circulation," Cooper figured. "Most of the men have from 75 to 100 descendants, and they all wanted extra copies of the paper."

Cooper began the series with articles on four men that he knew personally and admired.

"But once the articles began to appear," he said, "local people would come up to me and ask, 'Why not do a story on my grandfather?' So the series kept growing. Before I was done, I had written an article on every octogenarian in Mason County who was a cooperator with Western Soil Conservation District and was still active in farming. The lives of these men added up to 1,457 years."

Conservation figured prominently in the stories, as did homely philosophy about the virtues inherent in farming and hard work.

One subject, James T. Cain, 80, had just planted 1,800 locust trees on his farm. "Somebody has to plant them," Cain was quoted as saying. "I won't get the benefit of them, but somebody will."

Another farmer, 82-year-old Roy Jividen, wanted to discuss the site for a new pond when Cooper came to interview him. And an 86-year-old farmer boasted that in all his days, "I have never had a boss over me."

Cooper said that despite their longevity, most of the octogenarians had never had their names in

"All were lean and wiry, like 87-year-old John R. Sturgeon (left). There wasn't a fat one in the bunch, and most had a history of staying out of hospitals. In talking with them, I compared them to men much younger who are generally complaining about something. Not these men. They have worked hard all their lives and are proud of it. J. Everett Gills (right) at 82 years still manages and supervises two farms of about 500 acres each."

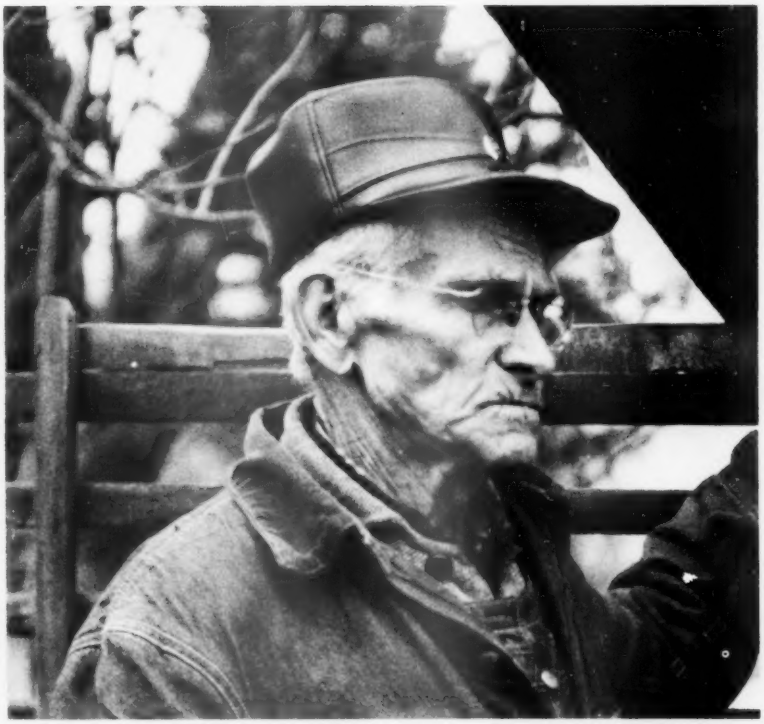
the paper before. "In some ways, they were a forgotten group of people," he explained. "Seeing the stories and their pictures in the *Register* put them right up there on Cloud 9."

The author, who admitted that he "likes to write," knocked out each article on his typewriter at home in an hour or two. He also took all the photographs, using a 4-by-5 Graphic camera.

A weekly column, "The Lay of the Land," which Cooper has been writing for 23 years, presently appears in the *Register* and in two other newspapers that serve local readers. Bits and pieces of it appear frequently in the larger dailies in Charleston and Huntington.

Cooper tries not to preach or editorialize in his column. "I try to stick to newspaper reporting, to talk about the people we've been working with and what they've done," he said.

Cooper's writing plans include a series on young cooperators in the county, possibly tied into the work of the Jaycees. ♦



"Sometimes we are prone to think that brains weren't invented until the 20th century, but after talking to many octogenarians, I'm convinced that people used to be as smart, maybe smarter, than we are today. 'When I became a cooperator in 1946,' said James T. Cain (top), who is 80, 'that was the last hillside I ever plowed.' John A. Kapp (right), 83, is still farming his land. 'I plow the way the land lies,' he said, 'and I turn the furrow uphill.' I asked several of these oldsters their secret for long and productive lives. More than one answered, 'Stay out of mischief and go easy on tobacco and whiskey.' "

ADMISSION
Everyone OVER 6YRS.
OF AGE REGARDLESS OF
FISHING OR NOT
HONOR SYSTEM
Fill Out Admission Envelope and Pay Inside Building
SEE GATES INSIDE - NO NIGHT FISHING PERMITTED

4,000 acres of fishing

Although Gulf Coast fishing waters are less than an hour away, DeFuniak Springs, Florida, is finding that fresh water fishing can prove a lucrative tourist attraction.

Declaring itself "the fresh-water fishing capital of west Florida," the town bases its claim on 400 ponds and lakes, having a combined surface area of approximately 4,000 acres, built by landowners in the Choctawhatchee River Soil and Water Conservation District.

The area's ponds and lakes have attracted people, drawn by stories of 1-pound bluegills and 10- to 12-pound bass, from hundreds of miles away. Bell and King Lake, the largest in Walton County, has 700 acres available on a fee-fishing basis.

Mrs. Pat Potter, manager of the DeFuniak Springs Chamber of Commerce, said "The growth of fishing as recreation in this area has, in the last 10 years, brought us community income equal to a small industry with its jobs and payroll. Our economy has definitely been given a boost by conservation programs in this way, and the end is not in sight."

SCS provided technical help in the planning and layout of farm ponds and of several of the larger lakes built primarily for recreation. —JOHN T. BARNES, *project coordinator, SCS, West Florida RC&D, Bonifay, Fla., and* LEO E. STRICKLAND, *area engineer, SCS, DeFuniak Springs, Fla.* ♦

Juniper Lake contributes to the 4,000 acres of fishing in west Florida.

Pollution made him do it

by **Donald M. Gladson**
District conservationist, SCS
Union Gap, Wash.

Joe Stenson, cattleman, was determined to stop contributing to the pollution of Cowiche Creek which provides water for his 250 to 300 head of cattle. And he did.

Stenson has a ranch in Cowiche Valley, 12 miles northwest of Yakima, Washington. For years he diverted part of Cowiche Creek's flow through five corrals on his ranch. Livestock wandered in and out of the ditch, contributing to the pollution of Cowiche's downstream flow that traverses the Naches and Yakima Rivers before it enters the Columbia River.

Cowiche begins as a clear, cool mountain stream high in Washington's Cascade Range. It winds its way down to the 13,000-acre Stenson ranch that borders the timber and sagebrush country on the Cascade's east slope.

After reading and hearing much about pollution and other environmental problems, Stenson, a cooperator in the Hi-Land Soil and Water Conservation District for 30 years, turned to his district and the Soil Conservation Service for guidance and help. And he sought cost-sharing through the Rural Environmental Assistance Program.

Andrew Linn and Arden Jones, SCS engineers assigned to the district, devised a unique plan to eliminate contamination.

Instead of flowing down the ditch, the diverted water now is carried through 1,090 feet of 10-inch concrete pipe. At each of the five corrals the water surfaces to a round 36-inch diameter concrete weir box, spills over a baffle, and returns to the bottom of the box. It continues down the pipeline to the box in the next corral, and what isn't drunk by the cattle reenters Cowiche Creek unpolluted.

Stenson said the system works well even in winter. The constant movement of the water, falling over the baffles, keeps it from freezing. ♦

Water for cattle surfaces to the 36-inch diameter weir box in this feedlot. It then spills over a baffle (shown in the inset) and returns to the bottom of the box. A pipeline gets it to Cowiche Creek unpolluted.

Sericea lespedeza—fit for fodder

by James K. Farley
District conservationist, SCS
Halifax, Va.

Sericea lespedeza as a forage crop?

Yes, sir, says Marshal Martin, of Halifax County, Virginia, particularly if it's the Serala variety.

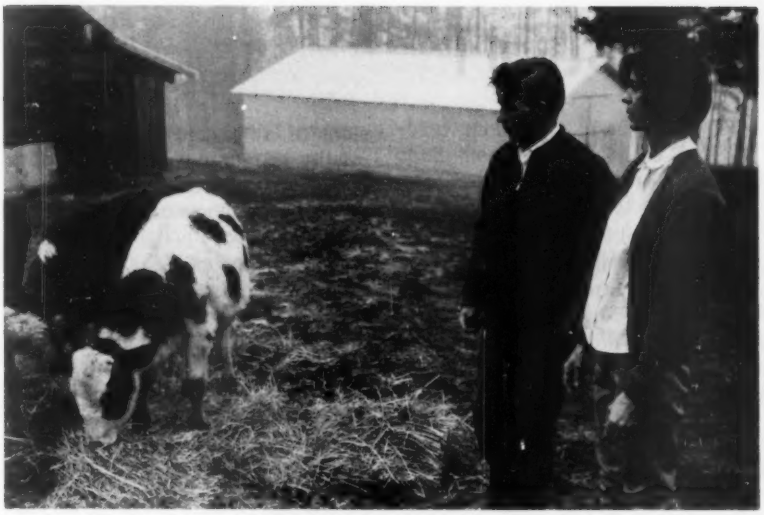
Martin should know what he's talking about. In 1965, after two "rough" years as a tenant farmer in North Carolina, he returned to his home county in Virginia and bought a 149-acre farm. Most of the place was in woods; the open land was idle or grown up in bushes. The soils are somewhat droughty, highly erodible, and more suited to bright tobacco than to grain, hay, or pasture.

Martin had no illusions about the farm or the work it would take to make it pay. His on-the-farm "team" included his wife Betty, their teenage daughter Joyce, and one hired hand. He also sought help from the Halifax Soil and Water Conservation District, of which he became a cooperator, and from the local SCS office.

Martin knew that his 5-acre tobacco allotment wouldn't justify his capital investment, and he turned to cattle as a source of income. Twenty acres of his best land was stripcropped for grain and tobacco, but most of the remaining open land went into forage production—60 acres of pasture and 12 acres of hay and grassed waterways.

A 1-acre pond designed by SCS was put in for watering livestock and irrigating tobacco. It was stocked with bream and bass.

Martin decided that Kentucky 31 fescue would be an ideal base for his pasture program. But the soils are too droughty for clover, so Martin turned to sericea lespedeza for both pasture and hay because it is drought-resistant and hardy.



Calves and beef cows on Marshal and Betty Martin's Virginia farm feed on Serala lespedeza and Kentucky 31 fescue. Martin says the Serala variety is "as good as alfalfa."

Sericea had been used widely in the region for wildlife food and cover and critical area stabilization, but it was not highly regarded by local farmers in pasture mixtures.

After clearing land for pasture, Martin established his fescue in the fall. He seeded common sericea the following spring, continuing until mid-July. Most of his successful seedings were made with a grain drill, but he also had good luck seeding sericea in July behind a light double disking.

About this time, Martin secured 100 pounds of the then-new Serala variety and began substituting it for the common sericea. When his pasture was established, he applied 1,000 pounds of 2-12-12 and 2 tons of lime per acre. He topdresses his pasture every 2 years with 500 pounds of 0-20-20 per acre. Today 90 percent of his stand is Serala, which is demonstrating increasing value throughout the southeastern United States as a forage crop.

A herd of 60 beef cows graze Kentucky 31 in the fall and spring. Serala sericea lespedeza is pastured in summer, with the excess growth cut, baled, and stored for winter feeding and for sale. Martin insists that the sericea hay is as good in quality as alfalfa.

Two years after he bought the farm, Martin was selected as Conservation Farmer of the Year by the Halifax District board of supervisors.

Recently, the former tenant farmer bought 51 acres adjacent to his farm. Fifteen acres of this tract has been seeded to pasture—fescue and lespedeza.

Meanwhile, Martin's daughter Joyce is making her own reputation as a farmer. She raises calves purchased from local dairy herds, an acre of cantaloupes, and 2 acres of truck crops for selling to local markets. Last year her income came within $400 of Martin's entire tobacco allotment. ♦

conservation in action

SCS pub pushes pledges

A Virginia chamber of commerce is using "Controlling Erosion on Construction Sites," an SCS publication, in a third-round effort to sell local builders on "taking the pledge."

The Chamber, which serves the town of Williamsburg and James City County, has prepared three versions of a "pledge to maintain the quality of our environment." One is directed to architects, one to developers, and one to building contractors.

Each pledge calls for erosion and sediment control, preservation of existing trees or planting new ones, trash maintenance, and avoidance of air and chemical pollution.

There is no sediment-control ordinance so far in James City County, but there has been "some talk of such an ordinance."

BUILDING CONTRACTOR'S
PLEDGE TO MAINTAIN
THE QUALITY OF OUR ENVIRONMENT

As a building contractor, I contribute to progress in this area. I am aware that man depends upon nature, that nature has made this area beautiful and that man must work with, and not against nature. I recognize, also, our obligation to our neighbors.

To this end --

I PLEDGE

A. In clearing a site, I will endeavor to remove the minimum of trees, shrubs, and other vegetation.

B. I will schedule the work so that raw earth is exposed to the elements for the shortest possible time.

C. When the construction site is large and construction schedules protracted, I will provide vegetation and/or mulching to be placed so as to minimize earth silt runoff and/or build sediment basins to avoid undesirable sedimentation of neighboring ravines, streams, rivers and lakes.

D. I will control wind-blown trash generated by my construction project to avoid visual blight on my own work site and on neighboring properties. I will provide adequate waste receptacles to keep the construction site clean and neat.

E. I will not contribute to air pollution by permitting on-site burning of trash or tires. I will avoid burning trees or timber whenever possible.

F. I will not pollute the soil with poisonous chemicals for vermin control except under the direction of a qualified and bonded expert.

Originator of the pledges is Rudolph Bares, Jr., chairman of the Chamber's Committee for a Quality Environment and an executive of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Bares sought lots of help in writing the pledges, including, he said, "expert help from geologists, microbiologists, and others with the College of William and Mary."

The first mailing, to local architects and builders, went out early this year with a covering letter from Bares asking each recipient to sign two copies of the pledge, retaining one and returning one to the Williamsburg Chamber.

"We will be publicly acknowledging those who have joined us in a common concern for environmental quality," Bares' letter concluded.

"So far," Bares declares, "we have received good response from architects, moderate response from contractors, and very poor response from land developers.

"Several architects not only signed the pledge but praised us for our efforts. A number of contractors and developers signed promptly but without comment."

A short followup letter was sent in April to those who failed to respond to the first appeal, and Bares says he picked up a few more returns.

Now, he believes, it may be necessary to back up his appeal with facts about erosion control, and he selected SCS's erosion-control bulletin to help do the job.

Eventually, the Chamber committee hopes to run local advertisements, naming and thanking those who have signed pledges.—HUBERT KELLEY, *Information Division, SCS, Washington, D.C.* ♦

Everything they always wanted to know about fish ponds

Four Spokane high school students have gone beyond the routine poster display in demonstrating their concern for a cleaner environment.

Jack Rutz, Jay Kehne, Jim Piton, and Gary Smith, working with Paul Jensen, instructor of aquatic biology at Shadle Park High School, spent 4 months running a chemical analysis of farm fish ponds in the Spokane area. Their intent was to learn about water quality and management. Their efforts proved useful to trout farmers and to landowners wanting a fish pond for recreation.

The four students began analyzing water samples in February. With help from the Central Spokane Soil and Water Conservation District, they selected 17 ponds for study. Many of the pond owners already had shown interest in receiving help in managing their ponds for better fish production.

The students kept records of each pond, and as water conditions changed from winter to spring they noted changes in physical and chemical qualities, including temperature, turbidity, oxygen content at various water depths, carbon dioxide, pH, alkalinity, hardness, and hydrogen sulfide. As warm weather came, they took samples of aquatic plants, insects, and other organisms to complete the analysis of each fish pond.

Throughout the 4 months, Jack, Jay, Jim, and Gary ran their own show. They contacted the landowners, set up and followed a firm work schedule (which took up many hours of nonschool time), and provided their own transportation to pond sites. SCS biologists reviewed their work periodically in the field or over the telephone. The young men tried to work out most problems themselves, but help was available if needed.

When the study was completed, records were consolidated and put in graph form by the students. An analysis of individual ponds was given to the pond owner with recommendations for water-quality management if needed. The Soil Conservation Service is keeping the data as a guide for landowners who have problems with fish ponds.—LEROY A. SHEARER, *biologist, SCS, Spokane, Wash.* ♦

SCS biologist LeRoy A. Shearer gives guidelines on checking water quality of fish ponds to (l. to r.) Jack Rutz, Jay Kehne, Jim Piton, and Gary Smith.

A remedy for wasted water

"The adage 'Waste not—want not' is as appropriate as ever," says Basil Newton, foreman of the Humiston Corporation ranch, near Montague, California. It was this adage that prompted the ranch to construct a tailwater recovery system.

Formerly, the 517-acre ranch had only enough water for 217 acres. "When irrigation water leaves the ranch it's gone forever as far as benefiting this property," Newton said in seeking irrigation water-management aid from the Soil Conservation Service office in Yreka.

The tailwater recovery system consists of a storage facility and a pumping unit. SCS helped in designing the system and in selecting a site for the storage facility. The storage pit is 368 feet long, 46 feet wide, and 10 feet deep. It stores only about 2½ acre-feet of irrigation runoff, but by constant use

a 5-horsepower motor and pump increases the overall capacity, delivering 300 gallons of water per minute.

Nearly 990 feet of 6-inch buried pipe returns the tailwater to the irrigation system's headwaters. A division box distributes the water back into the irrigation system.

More water has been available, apparently from subsurface sources, than was expected; consequently the pump does not at any time empty the pit.

Newton plans to use the recycled water on land already under cultivation and in developing additional pasture acreage. The tailwater has already opened up an additional 48 acres to irrigation. And production of forage on the ranch has increased from 900 to 8,000 pounds per acre, an increase from 1 animal-unit-month to 9 animal-unit-months per acre.

Cost-sharing through the Rural Environmental Assistance Program helped defray the overall cost of construction.—HERBERT JACKSON, *engineering technician, SCS, Yreka, Calif.* ♦

USDA scientists tour USSR "new lands"

A USDA delegation of agricultural specialists returned this month from the Soviet Union after a study-tour of the USSR's "new lands." The 6-man group was headed by Dr. John E. McClelland, head of the soil correlation staff, SCS Regional Technical Service Center, Lincoln, Nebraska.

The purpose of the trip was to evaluate Soviet experience in bringing 100 million acres of semiarid land under cultivation, primarily of spring wheat. The new-land program in the Soviet Union is now approximately 15 years old and is centered in areas east of the Urals, the northern part of the Kazakhstan, and the southern part of Western Siberia. The trip was part of a continuing cultural exchange of USA-USSR scientists in different fields. ♦

Vacant lots for city tots

Children dodge traffic in city streets while vacant lots fill up with trash. Not in Farrell, Pennsylvania.

Duane Mohney, a local recreation consultant, with the help of district conservationist Richard Crowley developed a plan to convert a vacant lot, knee-deep in trash and cinders, into a children's playground.

The entire community rolled up its sleeves and pitched in to help. Neighborhood youngsters helped clear rubbish from the lot. The Soil Conservation Service helped with erosion problems; it supervised the covering of the entire area with a deep coating of soil. RC&D funds were obtained to purchase the lime, fertilizer, and seed needed to stabilize the area. Several boys seeded the sloping banks, and a group of oldtimers planted trees. Playground equipment, donated by a local steel firm, was installed, and soon the only sound was that of children hard at play.

Like most older eastern cities, Farrell has a shortage of playgrounds in densely populated areas. Large sites are unavailable or too distant from center city. Farrell has found one answer in pocket-sized parks.

While other vacant lots in several parts of the city are being transformed into play areas, the success of the first keeps growing. —ELBERT WELLS, *soil conservationist, SCS, Stroudsburg, Pa.* ♦

A pipedream comes true

Norbert Wasserburger is one of six neighboring water-short Sioux County, Nebraska, ranchers who have seen their pipedream materialize in the form of a 29-mile plastic pipeline.

Potable water has been a challenging problem on what is now the 5,200-acre Wasserburger ranch since Henry Wasserburger, Norbert's grandfather, homesteaded the original 160 acres in 1887. Surface water and shallow-well water in the area have too much salt.

On the Wasserburger ranch, 15 dug wells and 20 dams failed to solve the water problem. At various times the family has hauled drinking water from Harrison, 20 miles away, and driven their cattle 3 miles to water at Hat Creek.

Wasserburger and his neighbors for years had coveted the good water in the foothills of Pine Ridge, about 15 miles away. To get the water to their ranches, they formed the Prairie Dog Pipeline Company in 1968. They were helped with their project by SCS specialists at Crawford, Nebr., and obtained cost-sharing under the Great Plains Conservation Program.

The six ranchers now have dependable water available for more than 15,000 acres of their range, and 31 watering tanks have been installed. Three of the families have, for the first time, ample supplies of potable water in their homes.

Standing near one of his tanks, Wasserburger summed up the bold step the ranchers had taken to whip their water problem saying: "I sure like to see those cows come up to a tank and take a good drink, rather than sipping around that alkali water."—WILLIAM J. MADER, *SCS technician, Crawford, Nebr.* ♦

Monitoring study completed

The Mitre Corporation, a private research firm under contract with the Council on Environmental Quality, has completed a comprehensive report on "Monitoring the Environment of the Nation."

It contains not only information on current monitoring but also suggestions for new types of monitoring activities.

Federal agencies, including the Soil Conservation Service, have been asked by CEQ for comments and recommendations on the Mitre study. ♦

Recon . . .

The District of Columbia's first nonprofit recycling center for trash was ordered closed as a nuisance. Complained the neighbors, "It became a dump."

Wind erosion in the Great Plains reached a 14-year high last season —the 4.7 million acres damaged indicating the worst year since 1956-57 when 10.3 million acres underwent extensive soil movement. The erosion marks a serious increase from the all-time low of 995,150 acres damaged in 1968-69.

The excessive damage was due to drought that struck the Southwest; the Soil Conservation Service survey showed 2.7 million acres of land damage in west Texas alone. Most of this season's damage was on lands insufficiently protected by the residues of the previous year's crops. Emergency tillage was effectively used to protect 3.9 million acres.

Strip-minable coal. Persons interested in the current environmental quality restrictions governing strip mining can find an up-to-date summary of these laws in a catalog of strippable U.S. coal deposits compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Mines. At this time 21 states have environmental quality laws governing surface-mine reclamation.

Interested persons can consult open-file copies of "Strippable Reserves of Bituminous Coal and Lignite in the United States" at the Department of the Interior Library, Washington, D.C., and at Bureau of Mines offices in Pittsburgh, Denver, Spokane, San Francisco, Dallas, and Juneau.

Stewardship message via the milk route. Purchasers of 1,500,000 cartons of milk in Louisiana last spring got a message—"Observe Soil Stewardship Week" — along with their milk. The milk carton information campaign was initiated by SCS district conservationists and soil and water conservation district supervisors.

Five dairies took part in the campaign. One dairy in Baton Rouge advertised on nearly a million cartons. The dairies contributed their help without charge. A spokesman explained, "We know the value of conservation."

Right change. "We will find new ways to be right when we hear the voices of need throughout the world, and here at home, that are saying to us: your machines feed more people, but many are still not fed; your chemicals increase production, but they poison the environment; your vision is fixed on a single industry, but a whole population needs your services; when are you going to change?"—*Valedictory address of Robert E. Stewart, Past-President of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers.*

A study, **"Soil Erosion in an Urbanizing Watershed,"** shows that agricultural land may contribute as little as one-fifth the total annual soil loss in an urbanizing watershed.

The Michigan State University Agricultural Experiment Station study, prepared by Terry A. Ringler, district conservationist at Grand Rapids, and C. L. Humphreys, from Michigan State University's Department of Resource Development, indicates that land undergoing urban development together with idle land being held for future development account for more than 68 percent of the annual erosion occurring in the watershed.

"There are two crimes against humanity which at their inception seemed like real boons," says Dr. Donaldson Koons, chairman of Maine's Environmental Improvement Commission. "They are the internal combustion engine and the flush toilet." Dr. Koons is concerned about the vast amounts of water used and then released by flush toilets, which eventually contaminate streams, rivers, and even the ocean. "For summer camps," he says, "outhouses are the best disposal you can find." He also worries about the wastefulness of flush toilets (100 gallons of water per person per day) in a time of short water supply.

Economists on the Virginia planning party are currently working toward establishing gaging stations on all watershed projects completed to date. They hope to provide a simplified procedure that can be used by district conservationists and sponsors to show the damage prevented from each specific storm flow. Data supplied by the prospective gaging stations will be used in public information programs in describing the benefits of watershed projects.

Pennsylvania is using **limestone barriers in waterways** in hopes that they will be an inexpensive way of neutralizing the acid in drainage from coal mines. If the prototype project on Trough Creek, Huntington County, proves successful, it is expected that this method of control will be extended to other streams polluted by coal-mine acid. The use of limestone barriers in acid-polluted creeks was prompted by successful research carried out by the Institute for Research on Land and Water Resources, Pennsylvania State University.

Review

Books

Crop Growth and Culture. By Roger L. Mitchell. *1970. Iowa State University Press. 349 pp., illus. $9.50.*

This book was written for two major purposes: (1) to develop an understanding of the important principles underlying the practices used in the culture of crop plants and (2) to develop the ability to apply these principles to production situations.

Because all crop growth and crop culture is a system that exploits photosynthesis, a discussion of radiant energy fixation, leaf anatomy, and chemical reactions involving ADT and ATP is presented first. The factors of temperature, light, CO_2, water, leaf arrangement, leaf age, mineral status, and LAI, as they affect photosynthesis, are also presented early in the text.

From this basic introduction the author branches out to review every aspect of crop culture from mineral nutrition to harvest and storage of seed and fiber. He discusses all factors involved in crop culture in general terms and gives few references to a crop-by-crop approach. The general approach allows the book to be more meaningful to readers interested in a greater variety of crops.

A chapter on shoot and bud growth and differentiation contains an excellent review of factors affecting tillering. The author discusses at least nine factors and cites at least 20 publications. All of the text is well cited and extensive literature lists follow each chapter.

The discussions of seed development, germination, and production are of special interest. Seed anatomy, development, dormancy, germination, quality, certification, and production information is presented in a general way but is complete and adaptable to many crops.

The text was published for and will probably find its most use in the agronomy classroom. The author has achieved his purpose of presenting the important principles underlying the practices of crop culture. The ability to apply all of the principles to individual crops will take study and skill on the part of the reader.—Herbert W. Everett, *manager, National Plant Materials Center, SCS, Beltsville, Md.*

New publications

Planning for an Irrigation System. By J. Howard Turner and Carl L. Anderson. *1971. American Association for Vocational Instructional Materials. (Engineering Center, Athens, Ga. 30601) in cooperation with Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Dept. of Agr. 107 pp., illus. $6.50.* The purpose of this book is to help an individual answer three basic questions before investing in an irrigation system: Will irrigation be profitable for me? Which type of system should I use? Approximately how much will a system cost? You will not learn from this manual how to design your own irrigation system, but you are told where to go for help to get a system that best fits your needs.

Multilateral Assistance for Agricultural Development. *1971. USDA Foreign Economic Development Service Rpt. 10. 43 pp.* A survey of major multilateral agencies concerned with agricultural development in low-income countries; covers the objectives of these agencies, the types of programs they conduct, and their operational procedures.

Corporations With Farming Operations. By George W. Coffman. *1971. USDA Economic Research Service Agr. Econ. Rpt. 209. 49 pp., illus.* A survey to determine the number, kinds, and general characteristics of corporations directly involved in the production of farm products. Two earlier studies (Agr. Econ. Rpts. 142 and 156) have already been issued with some of the survey data. This report includes data from the two previous reports plus discussions on labor and management as well as special surveys of Hawaii and California.

A Soil Science Career for You in SCS. *Rev. 1971. USDA Misc. Publ. 716. 8-page folder, illus.*

Shall Not Perish From the Earth. *1971. USDA Forest Service. [36] pp., illus., color.* Reports that despite the environmental chaos caused by man—urbanization and crowded and encroaching cities—much of the land in the 20-state Eastern Region of the Forest Service stands today as a tribute to reclamation management. Makes the point that the beauty and substance of today's forests will be discovered in the expression of tomorrow's cities.

Rural Poor Who Could Benefit From Job Retraining in the East North Central States. By Marvin E. Konyha. *1971. USDA Economic Research Service Agr. Econ. Rpt. 204. 35 pp.* Presents the findings of a 1967 survey made of open-country residents over 15 years of age.

Prospective Cost of Adjusting to a Declining Water Supply—Texas High Plains. By Wyatte L. Harman, W. F. Hughes, and J. R. Martin. *1971. Dept. of Agr. Econ. and Rural Sociology, Tex. Agr. Expt. Sta. (College Station, Tex.). Tech. Rpt. 71-3. 23 pp., illus.* A detailed account of 1969 irrigated-farm operations; includes acreage of various crops irrigated, number of times irrigated, production practices and requirements, and amount, kind, size, costs, and use of irrigation facilities on 19 farms on the Southern High Plains. Side roll sprinkler irrigation systems equipped with trailing laterals were used.

In Your Service, the Work of Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers. *Rev. 1971. USDA Agr. Inf. Bull. 136. [24] pp., illus. $0.25.*

Decorative Plants of Appalachia—a Source of Income. By Thomas C. Nelson and Malcome J. Williamson. *1970. USDA. Agr. Inf. Bull. 342. 31 pp., illus. $0.35.* Describes coniferous and hardwood trees, shrubs and vines, ferns, and lesser plants that grow in the mountain areas of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Small Watershed Projects. *Rev. 1971. USDA Soil Conservation Service, SCS-CI-4. 4 pp., illus.* A brief step-by-step outline on how small watershed projects work.

Growing Ornamentals in Urban Gardens. By Henry M. Cathey. *1971. USDA Home and Garden Bull. 188. 22 pp., illus. $0.15.* Gives specific information on the kinds of plants that will grow in an urban environment, methods and techniques used to grow them, and the protection plants need to survive.

A Comparison of Capital Requirements and Labor Use, Alternative Sprinkler Irrigation Systems—Texas High Plains. By Ronald D. Lacewell and William F. Hughes. *1971. Dept. of Agr. Econ. and Rural Sociology, Tex. Agr. Expt. Sta. (College Station, Tex.). Inf. Rpt. 71-3. 15 pp.* Reports on water distribution costs on Southern High Plains farms equipped with side roll, trail-line sprinkler irrigation systems.

The Projected Effects of Water Resource Development on Land Use and Crop Production Costs in the White River Basin. By Gene Harris and James H. White. *1971. USDA Economic Research Service Bull. 764. 51 pp., illus.* Estimates the future effects of proposed drainage and flood-protection projects on land use and crop production costs in the White River Basin and evaluates the potential of the White River Basin to meet its share of the nation's projected food and fiber needs in 1980.

A Selected Bibliography of Natural Plant Communities in 11 Midwestern States. By Arnold J. Heerwagen. *1971. USDA Misc. Publ. 1205. 20 pp. $0.30.* Publications listed describe plant communities in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Soil surveys

Phillips County, Colorado. By John I. Brubacher, Alan E. Amen, Louis A. Fletcher, Everett E. Geib, and Tom R. Moore. *1971. 53 pp., illus.; maps 3.17 inches to the mile (1:20,000).*

Calvert County, Maryland. By Earle D. Matthews. *1971. 76 pp., illus.; maps 4 inches to the mile (1:15,840).*

Greene County, Alabama. By James A. Cotton. *1971. 94 pp., illus.; maps 3.17 inches to the mile (1:20,000).*

Washington County, Wisconsin. By Keith O. Schmude. *1971. 105 pp., illus.; maps 4 inches to the mile (1:15,840).*

Carson Valley Area, Nevada-California. By L. N. Langan. *1971. 129 pp., illus.; maps 4 inches to the mile (1:15,840)*

Power River Area, Montana. By John L. Parker, Lester R. Guptill, Jr., Kenneth M. Bajema, William A. Berg, Leon Logan, and Robert E. Adams. *1971. 99 pp., illus.; maps 3.17 inches to the mile (1:20,000).*

Orange County, Virginia. By J. B. Carter, J. W. Wills, and W. E. Cummins. *1971. 169 pp., illus.; maps 4 inches to the mile (1:15,840).*

Keokuk County, Iowa. By R. G. Jones and J. D. Highland. *1971. 107 pp., illus.; maps 4 inches to the mile (1:15,840).*

Meetings

September

5-15 International Soil Science Society, West Germany
13-15 International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners, Salt Lake City, Utah
Theme: The Role of Wildlife in a Changing Environment
Keynote speaker: Nathaniel P. Reed, Assistant Secretary of the Interior (Fish and Wildlife and Parks)
15-18 American Fisheries Society, Salt Lake City, Utah
19-23 National Conference on State Parks, Des Moines, Iowa
21-24 Association of Conservation Engineers, Jackson, Wyo.
26-30 Society of American Foresters, Cleveland, Ohio
Theme: Forestry in an Urbanized Society
28-30 National Symposium of Animal Waste Management, Warrenton, Va.

October

3-8 Water Pollution Control Federation, San Francisco, Calif.
10-13 American Forestry Association, Seattle, Wash.
11-13 Future Farmers of America, Kansas City, Mo.
13-15 National Conference of Editorial Writers, Pittsburgh, Pa.
13-16 National Association of Biology Teachers, Chicago, Ill.
14-15 American Forest Institute, St. Louis, Mo.
15-16 The Nature Conservancy, Savannah, Ga.
16-20 American Bankers Association, San Francisco, Calif.
17-20 Farm and Industrial Equipment Institute, San Antonio, Tex.
17-21 National Association of State Foresters, Honolulu, Hawaii
18-22 National Congress for Recreation and Parks, Houston, Tex.
18-22 American Society of Civil Engineers, St. Louis, Mo.
20-22 Association of Engineering Geologists, Portland, Oreg.
23-26 American Institute of Biological Sciences, Inc., Miami Beach, Fla.
24-28 American Institute of Planners, San Francisco, Calif.
25-29 American Water Resources Association, Washington, D.C.
30-Nov. 2 Sprinkler Irrigation Association, Scottsdale, Ariz.

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From the Administrator:

A new kind of magazine

A new editor, Phil Chavez, has taken over responsibility for SOIL CONSERVATION magazine, and, like all new editors, he brings with him a fresh outlook and new ideas.

This seems an appropriate time, therefore, to talk about what we are trying to accomplish with these 24 printed pages each month and to share some of the thinking behind the changes in store.

The primary audience for SOIL CONSERVATION is our own employees and the supervisors of the 3,000-plus conservation districts throughout the nation. The magazine is read by many other people, including nearly 3,000 paid subscribers, but it is, by and large, a "family" publication, directed editorially to SCS employees and district people.

Its primary function is to inform, and we want that information to be as useful and easy to assimilate as possible.

What sort of informing do we want to do?

First, we want to share ideas that are worth emulating, that can help conservationists do a better job. The article this month about DC John Cooper's successful series of hometown newspaper stories on 80-year-old cooperators is an example.

Second, we want to present "spark-plug" ideas, ideas with a chance of catching fire and spreading to other communities. That's why the editor decided to run an article about the "conservation pledge" for builders devised by a local chamber of commerce in Virginia. Those pledges could catch on in dozens of different communities.

Third, we want to present more news about conservation—new conservation research; new conservation applications and practices; new studies, books, and reports; new campaigns and ideas.

Fourth, we want to run articles that can help our people obtain the broadest possible perspective on the increasingly complex job of soil and water conservation in the seventies.

Obviously, this is a tall order, and Phil Chavez won't be able to do it without a great deal of help from the field. Every good story begins with accurate reporting, and, as our moon explorers have discovered, nothing beats going to a site yourself and taking a look around.

Everyone in the field should try to be the "eyes and ears" of the magazine. Some of you, both SCS employees and district supervisors, are excellent writers and photographers, and your submissions are both needed and welcome. There also are people in the field who would rather break an arm than write an article, but who have the ability to spot a good story and tell somebody about it. The editor has need of calls and letters from people in this latter category who can provide story leads for a professional writer to cover.

A month ago, the themes for the next 13 issues of SOIL CONSERVATION were announced. They deal with such significant topics as the future of districts, waste disposal, and town-and-country planning. These can be a helpful guide to field people looking for story ideas of current interest.

So keep our new editor supplied with your ideas and suggestions. SOIL CONSERVATION can be as informative and as fresh and lively as the people in the field want to make it.

Kenneth E. Grant